by Bonnie Loshbaugh – bloshb@pugetsound.org – Updated March 24, 2011

Twitter protocols
1) Logging in
2) Sending messages
3) Including Links
4) Retweeting
5) Talking to/about other twitter users
6) Twitter lists
7) Hashtags
8) Metrics

1) Logging in
❖ Besides using twitter.com to post messages, you can also use a variety of online or desktop programs, many of which allow to you manage multiple accounts from one place, and to schedule messages to go out in the future. I recommend spending a little time exploring the different options to see which one works for you, but here are three I have tried.
  ▪ TweetDeck is a program which you can download to your computer. TweetDeck organizes messages into multiple customizable columns.
  ▪ cotweet is a program which runs entirely online, no downloads/installations necessary. You will need a co-tweet account, and then to add the pugetpeople twitter account to it. Co-tweet markets itself as the "business solution" for twitter, as it allows for messages to be "assigned" to users to follow up on. Cotweet organizes messages similar to an email inbox. In the past, co-tweet sometimes ran very slowly and had errors, leading me to try Hootsuite.
  ▪ HootSuite is also online and similar to TweetDeck in that it organizes messages in columns. It limits the number of columns you can have open, and is fond of self-promotion – as they roll out new features, you can often try them early if you will tweet that are you doing so.
  For a lot more options, this Mashable article is a good start.
  http://mashable.com/2009/05/18/twitter-apps-manage-multiple-accounts/
  But as of October 2010, they still identify TweetDeck, cotweet and HootSuite as the big three.
  http://mashable.com/2010/10/21/social-media-management-tools/

2) Sending messages
❖ Messages have to be 140 characters or less. All twitter clients will indicate if you have gone over the limit.
❖ Sign your message! Because there are multiple people behind "pugetpeople," we would like to distinguish between different voices. At the end of your message, add your initials after a ^ sign, ie Bonnie's messages end with ^BiL. Two or three letter initials are both fine.

3) Including links
❖ Because twitter messages are so short, a vast majority of them are merely pointing out a larger resource by including a link. Because of the length restrictions, links are shortened by any number of services such as tinyurl, is.gd, etc etc.

❖ We have used http://bit.ly because it tracks how many people click on the link, however HootSuite's internal shorteners, ow.ly and ht.ly also provide metrics.

❖ Paste the entire shortened link into the message. We want to make it easy for readers: if you leave off http://, they will have to cut and paste the link into their browser; with http:// they can simply click.

➢ Also, because the bit.ly account is linked to the pugetpeople twitter account, you can send twitter messages directly from bit.ly as well.

4) Retweeting

❖ A "retweet" is a repeat of someone else's message. If you see a message that you like, you can repeat it with RT @user at the beginning.

❖ I.E. I see a message from WA Dept of Fish & Wildlife,

▪ WDFW warns anglers to release chinook salmon in marine areas 5, 6 - http://bit.ly/3afJWI

❖ So I repeat it as

▪ RT @WDFW: WDFW warns anglers to release chinook salmon in marine areas 5, 6 - http://bit.ly/3afJWI

❖ Most twitter clients will a RT button that resends the message automatically, some with the option to edit it, some without.

❖ You can also repeat a RT, but take out extra RTs, i.e.

▪ RT @SeafoodWatch @EdibleSF: @SunsetMag has an AWSOME online guide to purchasing/prepping sustainable seafood: http://bit.ly/13C1c0 ^BiL

❖ Editing RTs: it is okay to edit down a message to make it fit with the added RT @user, but try to keep the message clear. However, it is better to replace the end of the message with ... than to convert words like to and for into numbers and look like a twelve year old.

▪ RT @WDFW: @WDFW: WDFW warns anglers to release chinook salmon... - http://bit.ly/3afJWI

❖ URLs in RTs: If there is a URL in message you are repeating, ALWAYS follow it to make sure it a) actually goes somewhere and b) goes to something useful. And then take the long URL that it points to, and make a new bit.ly url for it, so we can see how many people click it when we post it.

5) Talking to/about other twitter users (aka tweeps/twits/tweeple)

❖ Including @user in your message is a way to get their attention. If you wish to address a user directly, include @user at the beginning of your message, i.e.

▪ @pugetpeople Thanks for all of the great info. People for Puget Sound is one of the best twitter follows for aquatic environmental news!

❖ If you are talking about something that might interest, or mention, a user, you can include @user within the message, i.e.

▪ 175+ ppl pledged last week to say 'no thx' to plastic bags & entered to win a whale-watch trip w/ @SanJuanSafaris http://bit.ly/mp3i9 ^BiL

❖ To send a private direct message to another user, include "d user" at the beginning of the message, i.e.

▪ d becker Thanks for all your great work on the One Puget Sound documentary!

You can only send direct messages to people who follow you. Vice versa, someone can only send you a direct message if you are following them.

6) Twitter lists

❖ Lists are a way to sort the tweeps you are following. We have created a number of lists, including tribes, govt agencies, partners, pacnw conservation and others. We are also part of 219 lists as of March 2011. Looking at the names of the lists we're included in gives an idea of how the tweeting public views us. You can see a visual representation of that data here: http://www.wordle.net/show/wrdl/3169381/twitter_lists

7) Hashtags, #followfriday &c.

❖ In order for users to more easily follow a topic, hashtags are used. This is when messages about a particular topic, event, etc, include a recognized word preceded by #.

▪ I.E. When summer temperatures reached record-breaking levels, many posts were tagged with #seascorcher. We try to add #pugetsound to some of our messages; the Chesapeake Bay Foundation uses #chesbay.

▪ Hashtags are often used for events. For instance, if we wanted people to twitter about attending our auction, we might promote the hashtag #hl09.

▪ When starting a new hashtag, it's important to do a quick search and see if it's not already being used for something!

❖ There are many commonly used hashtags, some of which recur on a weekly basis. Here are a few I have found out about.

▪ #ecomonday - used to promote twitter users who are in some way environmentally friendly

▪ #charitytuesday - started by a group in Britain as a way for users to point out what groups they support

▪ #waterwednesday - to share (fresh)water related facts

▪ #followfriday (also #ff) - like #ecomonday, used to point who you think is worth following

▪ #fb - often appended to the end of messages, indicates that it is also posted a facebook page

▪ #seattle - there are many geographic location hashtags

▪ #waleg – news about the Washington legislature. In 2011, the Environmental Priorities Coalistion chose to use #envpriorities #cleanwaterjobs #coalfree #reducephosphorus and #envbudget for messages.

❖ Why use hashtags? Because someone might see a #waterwednesday in someone else's message, wonder about the topic, do a search, and see our messages also using the hashtag. Or if enough people use it, it can become a 'trending topic,' and get exposure to those who are curious about trending topics. This has been used as a marketing technique - check out the story on #moonfruit http://uk.techcrunch.com/2009/07/04/why-is-moonfruit-trending-on-twitter-its-the-rebirth-of-a-startup/

❖ Ways to follow hashtags are via search.twitter.com, www.hashtag.com or www.twitterchat.com

8) Metrics

by Bonnie Loshbaugh – bloshb@pugetsound.org – Updated March 24, 2011

- ❖ Want to keep track of the numbers and how we're doing? You can get your data dork on with the following websites
- ❖ **http://tweetstats.com/status/pugetpeople**
- ❖ **http://twittercounter.com/pugetpeople**
- ❖ **http://klout.com/pugetpeople**
- ❖ **http://twittergrader.com/pugetpeople**